

[Ed Grantham]

LM/ [??] [?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W. Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE October 24, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore, Nebraska

1. Name and address of informant James G. Eastman, 603 North 27th
2. Date and time of interview Monday, 9 to 11:30 a.m.
3. Place of interview 1025 North 21st; Place of Eastman Milling Company
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Lives at [803?] North 27th Street. Mr. Eastman has an old-fashioned stone [?] mill at 1025 North 21st Street. Possibly the only such mill of this kind left in Nebraska. He is a farmer and at his residence at North 27th his home is old-fashioned, but comfortable. [????]

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman

Library of Congress

DATE October 24, 1938

ADDRESS 2438 [?] St. Lincoln

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT James G. Eastman, 603 North 27th

1. Ancestry Scotch-Irish
2. Place and date of birth Nebraska, 56 years ago
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates [Tecumsch?], 1886-1917, Lincoln, 1917 until now.
5. Education, with dates 8th grade
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates Farmer, miller
7. Special skills and interests Farming and his family
8. Community and religious activities Presbyterian
9. Description of informant Looks like a farmer. Is tall and thin, ruddy [cheeksqand?] talks loud.
10. Other points gained in interview

He claims he has had a hard life. One of the few stone [buhr?] millers left in the country.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

I came from [Tecumsch?], Nebraska, where I was born 56 years ago.

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The first rural mail route in the United States was established in [Tecumsch?], Nebraska about 1896. The carrier drove an old pony road cart behind the pony and carried the mail-sack between his legs. The first route went out five miles west of [Tecumsch?].

I have seen some terrible prairie fires. The fires would start way down in Kansas and come clear up to Nebraska. The fires would go faster than any horse could run. Small game, such as rabbits, [snakes?] would be burned alive. The fires would be so hot that you could see the grass sink 30 yards ahead of the flames. You could hear a great roar and the fires were terrible to behold.

In the earlier days of our childhood we had a terrible time to keep warm. We never knew when a great storm would come up and just how the next day would be. My mother would send me out to pick up buffalo chips, sunflower stalks, and big weeds and sticks which we piled up for fuel.

I have seen frost in Nebraska in July. Seen the leaves freeze off and all of our corn would be ruined. Then again I have seen the corn freeze in June and we would use the corn then for hog-food but even then it wasn't much good for that. I have never seen it frost in August in Nebraska but have seen a killing frost on September 10. 1917. The frost would kill the wild prairie hay which hurt us considerably. In 1903, 1906 and 1907 we plowed twelve months of the year and in these three years there wasn't any snow at all.

In the early days of Nebraska, game used to be very plentiful. Wild chickens by the thousand now they are all gone. [Plovers?], and [Kill Deers?], two birds which used to be plentiful are now extinct.

When I was a boy I used to go fishing with an old man. We would go to a large stream a little ways out of [Tecumsch?]. The stream was a beautiful place with all kinds of wild flowers, water lilies, cat-tails, and so forth. Out of this stream we would catch large cat-fish, bullheads and mammoth frogs. The stream was about ten feet deep and as I said just

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about the most beautiful place in Nebraska. Now if you would go to [Tecumsch?] where the stream was in my boyhood you would find it gone and nothing there at all to show for it. What made it leave was the plowing that was done all about it. The farmers plowed which made the dirt un down and that and many, many drouts dried it up and so one of most beautiful places in Nebraska fifty years ago is now gone but not forgotten. How many such beautiful places that have perished from the work of man and misfortunes no one knows.

My father was a miller and taught me the trade. He was a stone [buhr?] miller and I do the same kind of work. In fact, I think I'm the only stone [buhr?] miller left in Nebraska.

I have seen many changes come about here in Nebraska. In the early days the farmers used to thresh their wheat by flailing. That is men with something like carpet beaters would the wheat and thresh it that way. [To?] men would become very fast and proficient and hit the wheat in rotation faster than one could count.

The first threshing machine had no wheels and had real horses furnish the power.

The first steam threshing machine was a blessing to the farmers as it saved many horses from dying. It was nothing for a farmer to lose a horse or two at threshing time as the terrible heat of the summer would kill them off at threshing time. The first steam engine had to have horses to guide it.

I have harvested many a corp and went through the whole processing using nothing but my hands.